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## **Press Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***Artwork Created For the Love of He''Art''***

The California Department of Mental Health proudly announces Metropolitan State Hospital's latest art exhibit entitled ***For the Love of He''Art''*** currently on display in the Atrium of the Bateson Building, 1600 - 9<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Sacramento. Both the title and the exhibit demonstrate that art truly comes from within the heart. All of the 44 pieces were created by patients who participate in the Arts In Mental Health (AIMH) Program at the hospital.

The colors and textures -- from deep burgundy and rust to the soft pastels and subtle charcoals -- seduce the observer to wander leisurely from piece to piece. The diversity of the art is clear when more is uncovered about the artists who range in age from the late teens to 'ninety-something' and come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Some are physically challenged; others are hearing impaired. All are committed to the hospital because of a mental disorder from county mental health departments or judicially (referred by the courts). In all cases, the AIMH program is an integral part of their treatment.

The title piece *For the Love of He''Art''* is located directly inside the Ninth Street entrance. Mixed media pieces and collages are intermingled among several pastels, charcoals, watercolors, and acrylics. Some of the pieces are three-dimensional and all carry interesting titles like *Weave of Life*, *Happiness is a Good Friend*, *Hello From Afar*, and *Feelin' Blue*.

"The AIMH program transforms patients' energies into creative expressions," said Dr. Stephen W. Mayberg, Director of the State Department of Mental Health. "Through the AIMH Program, these individuals learn coping and decision-making skills which improve their quality of life. It may be living more independently within the hospital setting, leaving the hospital and entering assisted living, or returning to the judicial process", said Dr. Mayberg.

Since its early beginnings in 1988, the AIMH Program has been a positive, productive experience for patients and staff alike. Beginning with just one theater artist and one visual artist providing occasional workshops for Hospital residents, the AIMH program has evolved into a year round program headed by a full-time artist facilitator and 20 artists in residence. The program is supported by funds from the State Department of Mental Health and the California State Lottery.

The exhibit is on display until the end of June. The public is encouraged to visit between normal business hours, Monday through Friday. Most of the artwork is available for purchase with prices ranging from \$50 - \$150. Proceeds from the sale of the art go to the individual artists.

For additional information about the AIMH Program, contact Nick Burgeson or Gail Willis, California Department of Mental Health Headquarters at (916) 654-1619 or Yvonne Cherbak, Metropolitan State Hospital (562) 651-4246.

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